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ACTIVISM

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Your essential daily news | MONDAY, JANUARY 30, 2017

High -9°C/Low -16°C Sunny at least

Donald Trump's administration: *Muslim ban*

'We should call racist policy racist'

RESTRICTIONS

Locals with connections to countries banned by U.S.

Ryan Tumilty & Adam Kveton
Metro | Ottawa

Ottawa residents who have been Canadian citizens for decades are still fearful of travelling to the United States, because of U.S. President Donald Trump's sweeping ban on travel from seven Muslim-majority countries.

The ban on travel from Iran, Iraq, Syria, Somalia, Yemen, Libya and Sudan came into force over the weekend, stranding thousands of travellers in U.S. airports.

Canadian officials confirmed Sunday the policy does not impact Canadian citizens or permanent residents who hold citizenship in one of the seven countries.

Amin Asadollahi, climate change lead at the International Institute for Sustainable Development in Ottawa, travels for work and said despite those assurance he is going to be cautions about travelling.

"Am I no longer able to do that? Do I have to teleconference in?" he said.

Asadollahi said the U.S. policy change was so swift he finds it hard to predict what the administration might do next.

"It's not clear and it also doesn't feel right. It doesn't feel right to be labeled as a criminal just because of where I was born," he said.

He said Canada should condemn these policies for what they are.

"He is labeling people based on their religion and their place of birth as criminals," he said. We should call racist policy racist."

Immigration Minister Ahmed Hussen said Sunday afternoon the government had worked hard to get clarification on exactly what was covered under the executive order Trump issued.

He said Canadians should feel confident travelling.

"We are very engaged on this issues, we continue to monitor the situation very closely."

HALEY RITCHIE/METRO

WHAT IT FEELS LIKE TO BE IRAQI-CANADIAN RIGHT NOW

Nadine Yousif, who's studying journalism at Carleton is — like so many — fearful of travelling south of the border

metroVIEWS

Plus: **More on the travel ban**

OTTAWA PROTEST AT U.S. EMBASSY

FASCISM 101 COMING TO CARLETON U.

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metro NEWS
Your essential daily news
Army sent in to help after ice storm in New Brunswick. **Canada**

Donald Trump's administration: *Muslim ban*

Anti-Trump protesters to encircle embassy

ADVOCACY

Demonstrators plan to rally during Monday lunch hour

Haley Ritchie
Metro | Ottawa

Ottawa residents are planning to send a message tomorrow to the Trump administration by joining hands outside the American embassy.

Details of speakers are still coming together, but organizer Alison Thompson said if enough people show up, they plan to encircle the embassy in a "human chain."

"We'll have somewhat of a rally in the beginning, with some speakers whose work and life experience is relevant to these anti-refugee or discriminatory policies," she said.

"The people who will be there are Canadian citizens and residents and foreign nationals and refugees and immigrants and Americans abroad who feel the effects of this executive order — whether it just counters their own beliefs and principles or whether it literally impacts them and their families and their friends."

> **It's really great to see such energy around activism.**
> Alison Thompson

The demonstration is planned to begin at 12 p.m. on Monday and continue until 2 p.m., targeting people on their lunch break in the downtown area.

Protesters are instructed to meet at the stairs at York and Sussex before continuing to the U.S. Embassy.

For Thompson — who is a permanent resident of Canada and citizen of the United States — the demonstration is personal as well as professional.

She's worked with refugees in Ottawa as a resettlement case worker in the states and while delivering health programs in the Middle East.

Her spouse, who is originally from Syria, may also be affected by the ban.

"We, fortunately, live in Canada and are not in a position that many others are but it is important to our family," she said.

"It's really great to see such energy around activism, and it is a bit tough to watch things from afar, even though it's not that far away. It's very encouraging in Ottawa, and in Canada in general, that people are quick to demonstrate their support for human rights."

Protesters planning to rally outside the United States embassy during today's event will be composed of Canadian citizens and residents, foreign nationals, refugees, immigrants and Americans abroad. ADAM KVETON/FOR METRO

BUSINESS

Shopify condemns U.S. order

Ryan Tumilty
Metro | Ottawa

Local tech firm Shopify joined dozens of Canadian tech companies on Sunday condemning President Donald Trump's immigration ban from Muslim majority countries.

Harley Finkelstein, the company's chief operating officer, said his own family's experience shows the value of immigration.

"My dad was an immigrant when Canada let in 40,000 Hungarians into the country during the Hungarian revolution in 1955. Our family is here because of Canada's inclusive policies and warmth. I'll never forget that," he said in an email.

He said the company has a strong belief in inclusion and diversity. He also said the company needs to be able to attract talent from around the world.

"Talent is not defined by borders and if they choose to come to Canada, the entire ecosystem will be better for it," he said.

The open letter commended Prime Minister Justin Trudeau for speaking in favour of inclusion Saturday evening.

"This visa would allow these residents to live and work in Canada with access to benefits until such time as they can complete the application process for permanent residency if they so choose," reads the letter.

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ECONOMY

Invest Ottawa has new leader on way

An Ottawa native with decades of executive experience at multinational technology companies has been hired to head up the city's lead economic development agency.

Michael Tremblay's appointment as president and CEO of Invest Ottawa was announced to staff Friday afternoon and ends a 10-month search to replace the organization's former chief executive, Bruce Lazenby.

Mr. Tremblay will start his new job on March 2 and said part of the inspiration to head Invest Ottawa came last fall when he turned 55.

"As you get a little older, you start thinking, 'What can I do to really contribute to the place (where) I was brought up?,'" he said.

"It is a really good time for me to dig in and do what I can to develop the economy of Ottawa."

Mr. Tremblay said he got his start in tech by selling semiconductors on March Road in the early 1980s before becoming a vice-president at Digital Equipment Corp.

In the 1990s, he joined EDS Systemhouse as an executive vice-president before stints at JDSU, Fujitsu Canada and SAP.

Mr. Tremblay spent the last decade as a vice-president at Microsoft Canada overseeing the software giant's public sector accounts in this country. PETER KOVESSY/ OTTAWA BUSINESS JOURNAL

> It is a really good time for me to dig in and do what I can to develop the economy.
> Michael Tremblay

ICE SCULPTURE TAKING SHAPE The Canada 150 ice sculpture in Confederation Park begins to take shape as carvers work in the dark on Saturday night. HALEY RITCHIE/METRO

RIDEAU HALL

Canada 150th birthday present: New pavilion

At Rideau Hall, what once kept milk cooled will now keep your feet warm.

The NCC unveiled its first Confederation Pavilion on Saturday — the Winter Pavilion.

Formerly a dairy building built near Rideau Hall in 1895 for the storing, cooling and manipulating of milk into cream, butter and cheese, the pavilion will now serve as a skating shelter and contain an exhibition on winter festivities and sports.

The octagonal building now sits beside the refrigerated ice rink located on the Rideau Hall site. The rink and pavilion are open to the public on weekends from Jan. 28 to March 26, from noon to 5 p.m. It's also open by reservation on evenings and weekdays.

The pavilion is one of 10 buildings in the National Capital Region the NCC identified as being underused but architecturally significant. The organization plans on refurbishing and opening the rest to the public in celebration of Canada's 150th year. ADAM KVETON/METRO

DETAILS

When to go
The rink and pavilion are open weekends from Jan. 28 to March 26, from noon to 5 p.m. METRO

Fascism 101 for public

MUSLIM BAN

Carleton, U.S. profs provide tools for critical analysis

Adam Kveton
For Metro | Ottawa

While some may be questioning what's going on with the world, some historians and older generations are experiencing a bit of déjà vu.

So much so that a Carleton history professor, alongside another from the University of Iowa, have started a new project comparing the actions of United States President Donald Trump and current right-wing movements in Europe to historically populist governments.

And yes, that includes Nazi Germany.

They call their project the New Fascism Syllabus.

It's a crowdsourced bibliography of news stories and academic articles that offer a reflection of today's history as it unfolds.

The idea, said Carleton professor Jennifer Evans, is to help people come to an educated opinion about what is going on by comparing what's happening now to past political changes. One important question, she says, is for people to decide for themselves if they'd consider what they are seeing now to be fascism.

"We look for lessons from the past. We look for the ways in which authoritarian governments manipulate public opinion," said Evans.

> **We look for the signs of how past governments have operated.**
> Jennifer Evans

"We don't say that Trump equals Hitler. But we look for the signs of how past governments have operated in order to try to see whether or not similar abuses are taking place now."

Rather than labelling individuals as being populist or fascist, Evans said she's more interested in comparing current methods to ones used in past authoritarian governments.

One clear parallel is the identifying of one segment of the population as the cause of the world's ills, she said — namely, Muslims in Trump's case.

Evans plans to offer a third-year course next winter called Themes in Transnational History: Populism to debate some of these questions.

RESOURCES

The resources include the book list, a Facebook page, a Twitter handle @NewFascSyllabus, and the existing blog Thehistoryinquestion.com, an examination of online civic opposition to the populist far right in Germany and North America.
SOURCE: CARLETON UNIVERSITY

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Keeping it light on screen

LITERATURE

Library users like it simple for e-book downloads

Ryan Tumilty
Metro | Ottawa

Ottawans prefer lighter fare when it comes to their e-book borrowing, with popular authors and series crowding out heavier reads at the library.

The library hit just more than 1 million downloads of audiobooks and e-books in 2016. The e-books that top the charts are the type most would use for a flight across the country or a beach read, including two of John Grisham's novels and two from Lee Child's Jack Reacher series.

Ann Archer, the library's manager of content services, said new titles are not always available in e-book and print, but they try to anticipate demand in both formats.

"We go on the track record of the author, so a Grisham, we know we are going to have to have lots of copies," she said.

She said the library has noticed the trend toward lighter titles on e-books, but said sometimes books, like the Goldfinch by Donna Tartt, are more popular in e-book for more practical reasons.

The Ottawa Public library aims to keep a balance between e-books and regular paper ones based on demands from readers. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Most popular OPL books

1. **The Illegal** — Lawrence Hill
2. **The Girl on the Train** — Paula Hawkins
3. **The Girl in the Spider's Web** — David Lagercrantz
4. **Rogue Lawyer** — John Grisham
5. **Go Set a Watchman** — Lee Harper
6. **All the Light We Cannot See** — Anthony Doerr
7. **The Nature of the Beast** — Louise Penny
8. **Even Dogs in the Wild** — Ian Rankin
9. **Fifteen Dogs** — André Alexis
10. **The Crossing** — Michael Connelly

"The Gold Finch is just a brick of a book to carry around," she said.

Archer said e-books have started to level off in popularity after several years of climbing, with printed books still being much more popular.

She said the library knows there are voracious readers here and they aim to please.

"We have an educated populace using the library in Ottawa and they have high demands from us and we try to meet them," she said. "We have a professional librarian team who do the selection based on a lot of knowledge, a lot of experience."

Most popular OPL e-books

1. **Gray Mountain** — John Grisham
2. **The Goldfinch** — Donna Tartt
3. **The Martian** — Andy Weir
4. **The Girl on the Train** — Paula Hawkins
5. **Make Me** — Lee Child
6. **All the Light We Cannot See** — Anthony Doerr
7. **Personal** — Lee Child
8. **Rogue Lawyer** — John Grisham
9. **The Crossing** — Michael Connelly
10. **Memory Man** — David Baldacci

CELEBRATION

Winterlude preparation underway

Haley Ritchie
Metro | Ottawa

Preparation for Winterlude is starting this week, with ice carvers busy all weekend inside Confederation Park and in front of Ottawa City Hall.

The annual festival of ice and snow in the capital kicks off on Friday, February 3 with live music and an outdoor dance party in the park. Over the weekend a main stage was being set up, preparing for artists like Coleman Hell and Karim Ouelle.

The 2017 cauldron outside of City Hall will be re-lit for the celebration.

New this year is the Ice Dragon Boat Festival, which will see paddlers from around the world race specialized boats on top of the water. As long as the ice on Dow's Lake cooperates, the races will take place February 17 and 18.

The Rideau Canal has been closed since January 20 due to warm temperatures, but a cold forecast for the next week may help with the freeze-up to ensure skaters will be part of Winterlude.

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Horaire : 35 heures par semaine.
Salaire : 47,573 $ à 72,354 $

TROIS (3) INTERVENANTS – ACCUEIL/PROTECTION
Contrats de durées variées (12, 14 et 24 mois) – Région de Prescott-Russell (C17-01)
Horaire : 35 heures par semaine.
Salaire : 47,573 $ à 72,354 $

UN (1) INTERVENANT – DÉVELOPPEMENT ADULTE
Poste permanent syndiqué – Rockland (P17-02)
Horaire : 35 heures par semaine.
Salaire : 42,185 $ à 68,052 $

Postes résidentiels

DEUX (2) AGENTS D'INTÉGRATION – FOYER DE GROUPE
Poste permanent syndiqué – Rockland (P17-03)
Contrat de 14 mois – Embrun (C17-02)
Horaire : 38 heures par semaine.
Salaire : 41,465 $ à 51,951 $

DEUX (2) PRÉPOSÉS AUX SOINS ET SOUTIEN PERSONNEL
Postes permanents syndiqués – Rockland (P17-04)
Horaire : 38 heures par semaine.
Salaire : 35,268 $ à 40,282 $

DEUX (2) PRÉPOSÉS DE NUIT
Postes permanents syndiqués – Embrun et Rockland (P17-05)
Horaire : 38 heures par semaine.
Salaire : 33,055 $ à 38,976 $

UN (1) AGENT D'INTÉGRATION – ACCOMPAGNATEUR
Poste permanent syndiqué – Embrun (P17-06)
Temps partiel, moyenne de 24 heures ou moins/semaine.
Taux horaire : 19,11 $ à 21,83 $

Postes administratifs

UN (1) SUPERVISEUR DES ARCHIVES ET COMMUNICATIONS
Contrat de 14 mois – Plantagenet (C17-03)
Horaire : Temps plein, flexible, selon les besoins.
Salaire : 64,325 $ à 91,866 $

UN (1) SECRÉTAIRE DE GESTION
Poste permanent non-syndiqué – Hawkesbury (P17-07)
Horaire : 35 heures par semaine.
Salaire : 44,216 $ à 56,460 $

Autres postes

UN (1) CHAUFFEUR D'AUTOBUS
Poste permanent syndiqué – Région de Prescott-Russell (P17-08)
Temps partiel, moyenne de 24 heures ou moins/semaine.
Taux horaire : 18,37 $

TROIS (3) RÉCEPTIONNISTES SUR APPEL
Postes permanents syndiqués – Région de Prescott-Russell (P17-09)
Temps partiel, sur appel.
Taux horaire : 19,10 $ à 24,56 $

Les candidats retenus seront évalués au niveau du bilinguisme écrit et oral, et ce, à travers les étapes du processus de sélection. Veuillez noter que l'exigence de base pour occuper l'ensemble des postes énumérés ci-dessus est de détenir un permis de conduire valide. Le salaire est déterminé au moment de l'embauche, selon l'expérience ainsi que l'éducation du candidat.

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Donald Trump's administration: *Muslim ban*

Voices from across Canada

As the reality of President Donald Trump's sweeping immigration order sinks in, dual Canadian citizens and refugees remain anxious and on edge. The order temporarily bars the citizens of seven predominantly Muslim nations — Iraq, Syria, Iran, Sudan, Libya, Somalia and Yemen — from entering the United States. **METRO CANADA**

HALIFAX

A Halifax woman with a dual citizenship can't even think about traveling to the United States right now.

News of the American travel ban shocked Nikki Jafari. Born in Iran, Jafari was raised in Turkey and moved to Canada as a child, settling in Halifax.

She said she used to travel to the U.S. a lot but not anymore.

"Now I'm just sick thinking about it," she said.

"It creates so much conflict for real people," she added.

Jafari said she thinks President Trump is unfairly targeting these seven countries. It also feels like the world isn't remembering the lessons it learned about hate and intolerance, she said. It's very sad, she said, that everyone is watching but not doing anything.

"It's just all so sad, when you think about the wars all over the world it's just the innocent people that pay the price for what the governments decide."

Edmonton's Saghar Sobhani, a 22-year-old Iranian woman, has been stopped from seeing her boyfriend in the U.S. CONTRIBUTED

CALGARY

An advocate for Syrian refugees says a Syrian refugee family who moved to Calgary shortly after their initial arrival in the U.S. is heartbroken they will not be able to visit family across the border.

"This isn't fighting terrorism, it's tearing families apart," said Saima Jamal, co-founder of the Syrian Refugee Support Group (SRSG).She described a Syrian refugee family comprised of a couple and young child who moved to Canada last year, shortly after their initial arrival in the U.S. The wife was planning to visit her mother, who lives in the U.S., but the SRSG had to explain that was no longer an option.

"Our volunteer was devastated that she had to tell this woman she could not see her mom," Jamal said. "She was almost in tears."

VANCOUVER

Vancouver resident and entrepreneur Wyle Baoween just returned from an annual family vacation in Hawaii with his American in-laws and had planned to attend several investor meetings in Seattle, but after U.S. President Donald Trump's executive order on Friday, he says he no longer feels comfortable travelling to those places.

Baoween, a Canadian permanent resident originally from Yemen, came to B.C. about one year ago as a student.

He and two friends co-founded the company, HRx, in an effort to eliminate racial profiling from the hiring process.

But the recently announced day travel ban has shaken his optimism.

"I was frustrated. You feel like you have no power to change anything," he said.

TORONTO

Bayan Khatib is worried she may not be able to see her family any time soon.

As a Syrian-Canadian, she should be able to travel in and out of the United States without an issue.

But hearing about migrants, refugees, and people with valid visas and green cards detained at airports or denied entry to the U.S. in the wake of Trump's executive order has left Khatib anxious about making trips south of the border.

On the other side of the border there's equal confusion. Toronto resident and Iranian-Canadian Newsha Ghaeli is currently conducting research at MIT, and decided to postpone her visit to see family in Canada.

"I don't want to take chances. It puts us under a lot of anxiety," she said.

WINNIPEG

An Iranian woman studying in Winnipeg is trying to understand what the U.S.'s new immigration policies mean for her and her boyfriend.

Azita Fazelkhah is from Iran. The 29-year-old has been in Winnipeg on a student visa since September 2014. She's working on a PhD in electrical engineering at the University of Manitoba and had planned to attend a scientific conference in New Orleans in February. The travel ban means she will likely have to cancel a trip she and her Iranian boyfriend spent months planning.

She said she was shocked when she first learned about the ban."I kept refreshing websites more than 20 times a day, trying to see if there's good news."

EDMONTON

Trump has suddenly canceled Valentine's Day plans for an Iranian couple, one who lives in Edmonton and the other in California.

Saghar Sobhani, 22, has spent about a quarter of her short life searching for a place to welcome her and her family — all of them Baha'i — a religious minority in Iran, the country where she was born and was forced to flee.

But what makes this so personal for Sobhani is that her boyfriend Sahab — who was also born in Iran and forced to flee — now lives in California, where he studies aerospace engineering.

Sobhani said she and her boyfriend met as refugees living in turkey, where she and her family had fled after religious persecution in Iran. About four years ago, the two were forced to part — he moved to California to be with his family, and she came to Canada.

"We technically can't see each other," she said. "I believe in the American people to do something."

Restrictions clarified

Ryan Tumilty
Metro | Ottawa

Federal Immigration Minister Ahmed Hussen said Sunday he's been assured Canadian citizens and permanent residents can travel through the United States as usual, even if they also hold citizenship in one of seven countries President Donald Trump targeted in an executive order.

Trump's order over the weekend banned citizens from Iraq, Iran, Syria, Libya, Somalia Yemen and Sudan from travelling to the U.S., leaving thousands in limbo at airports around the world.

Hussen said he has received assurance from officials that dual-Canadian citizens and permanent residents with a valid card would not be stopped.

Daniel Jean, Canada's National Security Advisor, said his American counterparts have assured him that dual Canadian citizens were never the target.

The minister did not condemn the U.S. actions, but said Canada would continue to be open to refugees. He did not commit Canada to taking on more refugees from the affected countries.

Hussen, who immigrated from Somalia himself in the mid 1990's, said he was never concerned about his ability to travel through the U.S. even when the implications of Trump's ban were unclear

"I am a Canadian citizen," he said. "There is no issue with my ability to travel."

Immigration Minister Ahmed Hussen. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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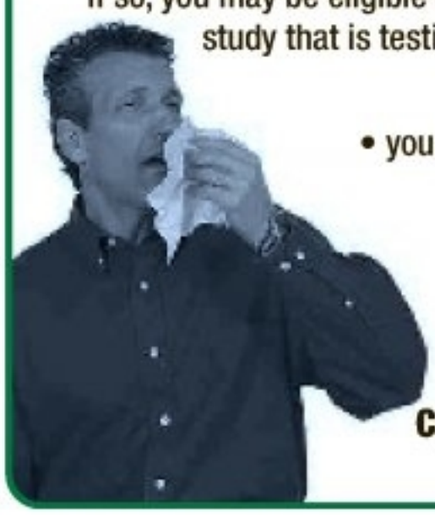

Donald Trump's administration: *Muslim ban*

Protesters carry signs in Lafayette Park near the White House during a demonstration to denounce President Trump's executive order. ALEX BRANDON/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Global reaction Many decry ban while nationalists applaud

UNITED KINGDOM
British Prime Minister Theresa May does "not agree" with Trump's order and will challenge the U.S. government if it has an adverse effect on British nationals, a spokesman said. A petition on the British Parliament's site attracted hundreds of thousands of signatures backing its call for Trump, who has been invited to meet Queen Elizabeth II, to be barred. AP

GERMANY
Chancellor Angela Merkel also regretted the ban. Merkel raised the issue during a phone call with Trump, citing the Geneva Refugee Convention that calls on signatories to take in people fleeing war. "She is convinced that even the necessary, resolute fight against terrorism doesn't justify putting people ... under general suspicion," a spokesman said. AP

NETHERLANDS
In contrast, nationalist and far-right groups in Europe applauded the restrictions and said they should be used a model for the continent.
The Dutch anti-Islam populist Geert Wilders said in a tweet: "Well done @POTUS it's the only way to stay safe + free. I would do the same. Hope you'll add more Islamic countries like Saudi Arabia soon."AP

ITALY
In Italy, the leader of the anti-immigrant Northern League party also expressed admiration. "What Trump's doing on the other side of the ocean, I'd like it done also here," Matteo Salvini said. Meanwhile, Italy's Interior Minister Marco Minniti, who had held top security roles in recent governments, warned against "equating immigration and terrorism." AP

Advocates 'in crisis mode'

RESISTANCE

Lawyers struggle, protesters rally as White House clamps down

President Donald Trump's immigration order sowed more chaos and outrage across the country Sunday, with travellers detained at airports, panicked families searching for relatives and protesters registering opposition to the sweeping measure that was blocked by several federal courts.

Attorneys struggled to determine how many people had been affected so far by the rules, which Trump said Saturday were "working out very nicely."

But critics described widespread confusion, with an untold number of travellers being held in legal limbo because of ill-defined procedures. Lawyers manned tables at New York's Kennedy Airport to offer help to families whose loved ones had been detained, and some 150 Chicago-area lawyers showed up at O'Hare Airport after getting an email asking for legal assistance on behalf of travellers.

"We just simply don't know how many people there are and where they are," said Lee Gelernt, deputy director of the American Civil Liberties Union's Immigrants' Rights Project.

Advocates for travellers say the chaos is likely to continue. The executive director of National Immigration Law Center, Marielena Hincapie, said "this is just the beginning."

"We're really in a crisis mode, a constitutional crisis mode in our country, and we're going to need everyone," she said. "This is definitely one of those all-hands-on-deck moments."

Protests continued across the country Sunday. Demonstrations first erupted Saturday, a day after Trump signed the order banning travel to the U.S. by citizens of Iraq, Syria, Iran, Sudan, Libya, Somalia or Yemen. The president also suspended the U.S. refugee program for four months.

Standing in sight of the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island, demonstrators on Sunday packed New York City's Battery Park to demand an end to President Donald Trump's ban on travellers from seven majority Muslim nations. The crowd gathered Sunday near the ferries that carry visitors to the statue and the island, the place where 12 million people entered the U.S. in the golden age of immigration. They carried signs saying "America was built by refugees," and "Muslim ban is un-American."

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Army sent in post-storm

WEATHER

Soldiers deploy in New Brunswick's hard-hit areas

New Brunswick's premier says the military is sending between 100 and 150 troops to help with recovery efforts in the areas that have been hardest hit by last week's ice storm.

Brian Gallant told a news conference in Shippagan Sunday that soldiers are being deployed over the next 24 hours in the effort to assist local authorities by going door-to-door to check in on residents, clear debris and distribute water and other essentials.

"We should see quite a presence tomorrow in the region," Gallant said.

"Everybody is in a mode in which we understand that every minute counts, every hour counts and every day counts, and we're all focused on one thing."

Gallant says discussions of cost have been put aside until after the crisis as security continues to be the top priority.

"You can't put a price on people's safety," Gallant said.

New Brunswick Power reported that more than 25,000 customers were affected by the outages Sunday, the bulk of them on the Acadian peninsula, where the impact of Wednesday's storm has been most severe.

The Canadian Armed Forces sent in a recon team Saturday to see how to best direct their efforts in response to the premier's request for help.

Gallant welcomed the military back-up, acknowledging there are several days of work ahead to get the entire province back on the electrical grid, especially in areas where most of the affected communities are cut off from power.

Around 350 crews worked under strenuous conditions Sunday that have stalled restoration efforts, Gallant says, such as extreme ice loading on lines, which has even caused new outages on the Acadian Peninsula.

He said in certain areas, the extent of the damage to electrical equipment has been more severe than expected.

He added that 31 people are being treated for what is believed to be carbon monoxide poisoning as of Sunday.

It's a more than fourfold increase in cases from the day. Two deaths last week were also believed to be caused by carbon monoxide poisoning.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Antoine Mazerolle collects water in Pointe-Sapin, N.B. Thousands of people in the province are still without power, days after a winter storm blasted through the region. THE CANADIAN PRESS

> **You can't put a price on people's safety.**
> Brian Gallant

YEMEN

Al-Qaida targeted in U.S. raid

A U.S. military service member was killed Sunday during a raid against al-Qaida militants in central Yemen that also left nearly 30 others dead, including women and children. The loss of the service member is the first-known combat death of a member of the U.S. military under President Donald Trump.

"Americans are saddened this morning with news that a life of a heroic service member has been taken in our fight against the evil of radical Islamic terrorism," Trump said in a statement.

The U.S. has been striking al-Qaida in Yemen from the air for more than 15 years, mostly using drones, and Sunday's surprise pre-dawn raid could signal a new escalation against extremist groups in the Arab world's poorest but strategically located country.

A U.S. defence official said the raid was approved by Trump. President Barack Obama had been briefed on it before he left office on Jan. 20, but for operational reasons it was not ready to be executed before he departed, according to the official.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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metro VIEWS
Your essential daily news
Monday, January 30, 2017

URBAN ETIQUETTE ELLEN VANSTONE

THE QUESTION

Is it polite to decline a destination wedding invitation from a work friend you wouldn't invite to your own wedding?

Dear Ellen,

A work friend of mine got engaged over Christmas, and invited me to the wedding. I was surprised because I love working with her, but we don't really see each other outside of work, and honestly if I was getting married I don't know if I would invite her. The only problem is the wedding is in Jamaica, which is pretty far from Calgary. So it will be expensive to go, and it's in May. I might be tempted to go and make a holiday of it if it was winter here, but it doesn't make sense to go in the spring-summer. I feel bad about not going, but also a little mad that she expects me to pay for a big trip like this. Is it polite to decline the invitation?

Saskia

Dear Saskia,

According to the most recent statistics I could find in a one-minute Google search, more than 160,000 Canadian couples are getting married this year, and, according to Weddingbells.ca, one in four will choose to have destination weddings.

Which means a lot of wedding guests will be shelling out for trips to fulfil someone else's fantasy instead of spending their hard-earned dough on their own pre-planned holiday.

Expecting guests — especially ones such as yourself who aren't close to the couple outside of work, and have no personal connection to the family — to commit so much time and money to their wedding can definitely seem unreasonable.

On the other hand, consider the possibility of mitigating factors. Is the bride inviting other people from work? If so, she may have thoughtfully included you rather than risk your feeling excluded. Is she or her partner originally from Jamaica? If so, they might justifiably want to get married there. Is she actually from Calgary, but going to Jamaica because she hates her local friends and relatives and wants to discourage them from attending? In that case, you can decline the invite with a clear conscience.

As I've pointed out in previous columns, weddings make all kinds of sensible people lose their minds. And the rest of us should go along, as much as possible within reason, in the name of love and friendship.

But that doesn't mean we have to bend to demands we find unacceptable or unaffordable. Simply send your regrets, no explanation necessary, and follow up with a thoughtful gift. If she complains or tries to pressure you, chalk her bad manners up to wedding madness, and try not to hold it against her.

Need advice?
Email Ellen:
scene@metronews.ca

Why Trump's Muslim travel ban really hurts

Nadine Yousif
For Metro | Ottawa

I made plans to visit New York City over the month of February. Like most Canadians, I did this without a second thought. After all, crossing the border down south is easy for us. Shopping trips in New York State, winter breaks spent in Florida, or a visit to countless U.S. cities to see family and loved ones are common occurrences for Canadians.

Suddenly, my plans came to a halt under Donald Trump's so-called "Muslim ban," all because of my place of birth. I am an Iraqi-Canadian who was born in Baghdad. My family came to Canada 10 years ago, and I currently hold dual citizenship from both countries. As my plans were halted, so was an embodied sense of safety and security that I've held within me since I've immigrated to Canada.

Being Iraqi in today's age already comes with its own challenges — waking up every day to news of massacres back home with the imminent fear of family members being lost, while dealing with the constant desensitization people seem to hold towards tragedies in the Middle East, is never an easy task.

But as an Iraqi-Canadian, I always held a sense of hope and a better future for my family and me. I am constantly grateful for the opportunities and support Canada has given me, while still being proud of my Iraqi identity — a fact I proudly display through a giant Iraqi flag that sits in my bedroom.

When news emerged that dual citizens from the seven countries outlined in Trump's ban are now barred from entering the U.S., the same Iraqi identity I held so dear felt like it was now reduced to an identity of a second-class citizen.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau reassured the public by stating that Canadian dual citizens can still enter the U.S. with no problems, but the damage has already been done for countless Canadians like me. This Muslim ban has taken hopes of new experiences, reconnecting with family and loved ones, and the simple freedom of will away from us, while reinforcing an idea that we are merely to be looked at as suspicious, criminals, and untrustworthy.

It is hurtful to know that despite being a citizen of Canada and having visited the U.S. on multiple occasions for the better part of the last six years, freely crossing the border can suddenly be taken away from me, simply because of my place of birth — a fact that cannot be controlled. It is hurtful to know that the possibility to see my grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins in the U.S. could diminish at any moment for no reason, and for matters that are beyond my control.

But overall, the most hurtful part is the promotion of the negative and false rhetoric that surrounds Arabs and Muslims in part by this ban, all while many fleeing serious danger are now being denied a chance at life.

For now, I may be able to cross the border in February, but this incident has left those like me to live in a constant state of fear and confusion due to blatant racism.

I know that I, for one, will not be able to cross the U.S.-Canada border under Trump's America without the constant fear of prosecution. And no innocent person, regardless of any place of birth or citizenship, should ever feel that way.

Nadine Yousif is a fourth-year journalism student at Carleton University, editor of the campus paper, the Charlatan and a dual Iraqi-Canadian citizen.

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metro LIFE

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Canadian documentary Rumble, about Indigenous musicians, wins award at Sundance

There goes the retirement dream

Nearly two-thirds of boomers say supporting adult children is preventing them from saving for retirement

ISTOCK

Lisa Wright
Torstar News Service

Rowena Chan knows all about the so-called "déja-boom" effect from relatives, friends and the usual water-cooler chatter among colleagues.

But it's also a growing part of her business. The phenomenon of grown kids boomeranging back home has become a big issue when it comes to baby boomers planning for retirement, says Chan, senior vice-president, TD Wealth Financial Planning.

According to a recent TD survey, the boomerang effect is in full swing, as a growing number of millennials continue to lean on their parents or grandparents for financial support — or to get their old room back.

In fact, almost 60 per cent of young adults ages 20 to 24 were living with their parents in 2011, according to the most recent census data, while one quarter of 25- to-29-year-olds were living with their parents that year.

And Statistics Canada says the trend has been steadily increasing since 1981.

One in four Canadian boomers admits to supporting their adult children or grandchildren, says the TD study.

"The people ready to retire in 10 or 15 years, they want their children to have a good start," she says, adding, "It may derail them a bit" from their retirement goals.

The survey found that 62 per cent of the baby-boom generation feels that supporting their offspring into adulthood is preventing them from saving enough for retirement, and 58 per cent reported feeling financially stressed by the situation.

"As a parent or grandparent, it's natural to want to help our kids and grandkids, who may be facing financial challenges such as finding full-time employment or paying their day-to-day expenses," Chan says.

"It's important that this desire to help is balanced with the goals you have when it comes to retirement," she notes.

The trend is not going unnoticed by boomers' children, either.

"It's natural to want to help our kids and grandkids who may be facing financial challenges
Rowena Chan, senior vice-president, TD Wealth Financial Planning

Almost half (44 per cent) of millennials report that they're fully aware of the financial stress the situation places on mom and dad, with 43 per cent of millennials saying they are willing to cut costs before asking for their parents' help.

Experts say that retirement goals are still within reach. Meeting with a financial planner and doing a goals-based assessment is key to determining what the options might be for parents who are supporting kids while keeping their retirement plans on track.

$ LIVING TOGETHER

Negotiate the return
Discuss how everyone can contribute to the household budget and operations. For example, parents may be able to cover basics such as room and board, but expenses such as cellphone bills, car payments, and recreational activities could be covered by the kids. Also, consider having everyone pitch in to the costs of running the day-to-day operations and dividing the household chores.

Prepare to relaunch
Whether it's a newly married son and his spouse and child, or a daughter who recently graduated and has moved back home, there are plenty of opportunities to educate all family members on the importance of being fiscally responsible and working toward financial independence. Use a financial planner who has experience working with multi-generational family dynamics.

Decide when to release
As everyone maps out their action plans, identify a date when you will no longer be financially committed to each other. As you approach this date, set up a series of mini-goals that will allow parents or grandparents to free up funds to divert toward retirement savings, while ensuring that the kids are meeting the savings targets they set.

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YOU CAN DO THIS ANESTHESIA TECHNICIAN

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WHY I LIKE MY JOB

Ian Hamilton, 41, anesthesia technician, Nova Scotia Health Authority, Halifax

I had been a paramedic for about 10 years and was looking for a change.

As a level-three paramedic, I knew I'd be pretty competent at anything in the operating room (OR) that had to do with anesthesia, so I thought it'd be a good fit.

(I took an) anesthesia course offered by the Maritime Business College; it was the first year they had outsourced it from the hospital, which used run the program in house on an on-demand basis. We learned the basics in class, and then part of the program is a six month, full-time apprenticeship in the OR.

(My job entails) a lot of different things depending on what service I'm working for, like orthopedics, cardiac or neurosurgery.

One of our prime responsibilities is making sure the anesthesia machine is running properly and has the equipment and gases connected. Then I'll speak with the anesthesiologist and find out if he had any concerns about the case, such as airway concerns, which might require special tools. I then help the anesthesiologist and monitor the equipment during surgery.

I like my job because the OR is like a great big family. especially in anesthesia. I've worked in emergency and prehospital for so many years, but I really didn't get the same feeling. It's also nice to be surrounded by people who are way smarter than you. Everybody is really there for the same common reasons and we work well together — the teamwork is outstanding.

HOW TO START

Anesthesia technicians are a relatively new field; most have training as a nurse, respiratory technician or paramedic. Some colleges — such as London, Ontario's Fanshawe and the Maritime Business College — offer specialized programs. Hospitals may offer on-the-job training. Those looking at post-graduate courses may need a respiratory therapy advanced diploma or nursing degree, as well as 4,000 hours of experience. Technicians are taught the science behind anesthesia, and train under an anesthesiologist to learn how to administer the drugs.

WHERE YOU CAN GO

Anesthesia technicians and assistants are sought after across Canada. Most major hospitals in Canada will have at least some technicians or assistants on staff. Beyond the OR, there are opportunities in diagnostic units, post-anesthesia care units, emergency rooms, intensive care and child birth centres.

THE BASICS: Anesthesia technician

$50K

Median annual salary for an entry-level anesthesia technicians, though salaries are dependent on experience and education level.

+14%

Projected rate of job growth over the next 8 years.

Data for this feature was provided by maritimebusinesscollege.ca, cas.ca, ontariocolleges.ca, onetonline.org and algonquincollege.com.

PERSONAL FINANCE

Stretching your food budget

Gail Vaz-Oxlade
For Metro Canada

Millions of Canadians are feeling the pinch over prices at the supermarket. ISTOCK

Food prices just keep going up. And up.

My usual rule of thumb of $50 per person per week for groceries just won't cut it in the winter, when a head of anything green costs $5.

So how do you survive on the limited amount you have designated for food?

You have to be a good shopper. For instance, a dozen eggs costs about $3 to $6. Eggs are full of protein and are quite filling.

Shop the sales
One week bread may be on sale, the next tins of salmon. Have a float of about $20 in your food budget to take advantage of the specials that will save you money over the month. Scour the fliers for deals and then hit the store with a price-matching policy. Peanut butter that usually sells for almost five bucks can be had for as little as $2.49 on sale. (I bought four.)

Use everything you buy
Waste is the biggest enemy of a tight budget. Old potatoes become hash browns. Just-going-off veggies become stew fixin's. Chicken bones become stock with addition of some onions (cheap) and left over veggies.

Look for alternatives
Beans are a great source of protein. Add a little sausage (you can buy a pack of five sausages for $3.49; add one to a meal for flavour), and bulk up with veggies that will give you the vitamins and minerals you need to be healthy. Overeating happens when you're eating empty calories and your brain says, "keep going" until you get the nutrients it wants.

Invest in healthy staples
Peanut butter, oatmeal, rice, chickpeas and pasta all make your food budget go much further.

Cook ahead
Batch cook and freeze portions so you can jump-start dinner when you're short of time or energy. Soup is easy to make and can feed you for days (or freeze it for a meal next week and in weeks to come for variety).

DIY
Don't buy prepared foods. Ever! Chop your own lettuce. Cut your own carrots. Back to basics, babies. Making your own sauces means you can flavour them just the way you like (more or less garlic, with or without cilantro).

Add variety
Mussels are cheap (less than $2 a pound) and you don't have to get too fancy with them. Add stock (do you know you can make fish stock from left-over shrimp tails along with fish skin and bones?), sweet onion, garlic, a bay or lime leaf and enjoy a fabulous meal. Or curry those puppies and then use the leftover sauce to cook your next meal.

Slow down
Make eating a wonderful experience as opposed to something you rush through. Savour the flavour. Relish the freshness.

Eat green
Stick with lots of fruit and veggies. As Michael Pollan says, "Eat food, not too much, mostly plants."

For more money advice, visit Gail's website at gailvazoxlade.com

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metro SPORTS

Somalia-born Olympic champion Mo Farah says the U.S. travel ban "seems to have made me an alien" and unsure if he can return to his U.S. home

Tavares' wish for Olympics

HOCKEY

Canuck star would love to return but NHL has other ideas

John Tavares' first Olympics proved to be "bittersweet."

Though he ultimately captured gold with Team Canada in 2014, Tavares didn't get to play in the gold-medal game against Sweden because of a knee injury.

"Well, personally I would love to go again," said Tavares during all-star weekend in Los Angeles.

Whether he'll get that chance again is unclear and looking increasingly grim. The NHL remains reluctant to commit to attending the next Games in South Korea with deputy commissioner Bill Daly stating Saturday: "If the status quo remains I don't expect us to be in the Olympics."

John Tavares GETTY IMAGES

The NHL's board of governors met Saturday and spent about 10 seconds on the Olympics, according to commissioner Gary Bettman. The governors have expressed increasing angst against players returning to a sixth consecutive Games, opposed to shutting down their season in February for an event which they believe lacks in tangible benefit.

Those players who have been hope they'll reconsider.

"I would love to go there (again)," said Sergei Bobrovsky, the Columbus Blue Jackets netminder who represented Russia on home soil in 2014. "I think still it's the biggest competition in the world."

Bobrovsky said the history of the event couldn't be replicated.

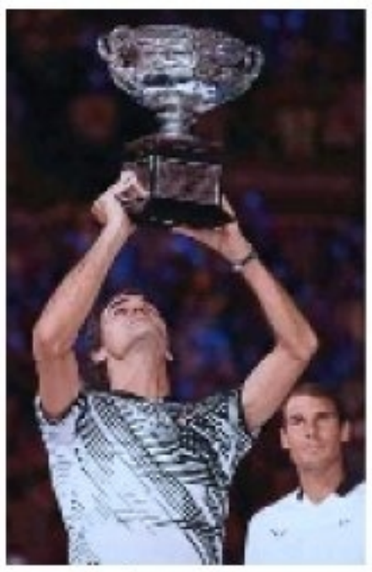
"To represent your country it's a huge honour," he added.

Beyond the logistical hurdles that shutting down for the Olympics requires — a compressed schedule and greater risk of injury — the NHL isn't convinced that attending actually benefits the league in the big picture. There was evidence, they've said, of an impact when the Games were in Salt Lake City (2002) and Vancouver (2010), but not so much when they took place outside of North America in Nagano (1998), Turin (2006) and Sochi (2014).

Beijing in 2020 certainly has appeal with its massive audience, PyeongChang far less so. The owners also weren't pleased when the International Olympic Committee said it would no longer subsidize the involvement of NHL players as it had since 1998.

"I think big-picture there's a lot of challenges to it," Tavares said. "But at the end of the day I think we as players love representing our countries and best-on-best hockey doesn't happen very often." THE CANADIAN PRESS

NHL TEAM CROSBY TOP TEAM MCDAVID AT ALL-STARS Wayne Simmonds of the Metropolitan Division scores on the Atlantic Division's Carey Price during Sunday's NHL all-star festivities in Los Angeles. The Sidney Crosby-led Metropolitan all-stars topped Connor McDavid's Pacific Division-squad 4-3, capturing the three-on-three tournament and a $1 million US prize to be split among the players. Simmonds was the game's MVP. JAE C. HONG/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



Roger Federer. GETTY IMAGES

AUSTRALIAN OPEN

Federer beats Nadal to title Down Under

Roger Federer won his 18th Grand Slam title and put some extra distance on the all-time list between himself and Rafael Nadal, the man he beat in a vintage five-set final at the Australian Open.

It was the 35-year-old Federer's first major title since Wimbledon in 2012, his first in Australia since 2010, and it reversed the status quo against his nemesis, Nadal.

"Against Rafa it's always epic," Federer said after Sunday's 6-4, 3-6, 6-1, 3-6, 6-3 victory. "This one means a lot to me because he's caused me problems over the years."

Federer had lost six of the previous eight Grand Slam finals he'd played against Nadal and was 11-23 in their career meetings. He also hadn't beaten the left-handed Spaniard for a major championship since Wimbledon in 2007. THE CANADIAN PRESS

IN BRIEF

Rahm flies high in Cali

Jon Rahm of Spain added his name to the burgeoning list of young stars Sunday with his big game and a big finish at San Diego's Torrey Pines.

Rahm made two eagles over the final six holes, the last one a 60-foot putt from the back fringe on the par-5 18th hole for a 5-under 67 to win the Farmers Insurance Open by three shots for his first PGA Tour victory.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Egypt progress to last 4

More late drama was provided by Egypt at the African Cup of Nations when it snatched the last place in the semifinals with an 87th-minute goal to beat Morocco 1-0 on Sunday.

Egypt went into the last four at its first African Cup when Mahmoud Kahraba hooked in a volley after a goalmouth scramble right near the end of the last quarter-final in Gabon.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Streifel takes junior title

Alberta's Kristen Streifel topped Ontario's Hailey Armstrong 5-3 on Sunday to capture the women's Canadian junior curling championship in Victoria.

Streifel and her team of vice-skip Chantele Broderson, second Kate Goodhelpsen and lead Brenna Bilassy will represent Canada at the world juniors in South Korea next month.

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MAKE IT TONIGHT

Spiced Roasted Chicken and Chickpea Traybake

PHOTO: MAYA VISNYEI

Ceri Marsh & Laura Keogh
For Metro Canada

Give chicken dinner a little jolt with this Morrocan spice blend and cool dipping sauce.

Ready in 35 minutes
Prep time: 10 minutes
Cook time: 25 minutes
Serves 4

Ingredients
- 5 Tbsp olive oil
- 4 cloves garlic, minced finely
- 1 tsp paprika
- 1 tsp cumin
- 2 tsp salt
- Pinch pepper
- Pinch of red pepper flakes
- 1 cup Greek yogurt
- 6 boneless, skinless chicken thighs
- 2 cups cherry tomatoes
- 15 ounce can chickpeas, rinsed
- 1 cup cilantro

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 450 F.

2. Whisk oil, garlic and spices together. Take 1 Tbsp of the mixture, stir it into the yogurt.

3. In a large bowl, toss the chicken, tomatoes, chickpeas and cilantro with the rest of the oil and spice mixture. Arrange in a single layer on a rimmed baking sheet.

4. Bake for 20 to 25 minutes.

5. Serve with a dollop of the spiced yogurt.

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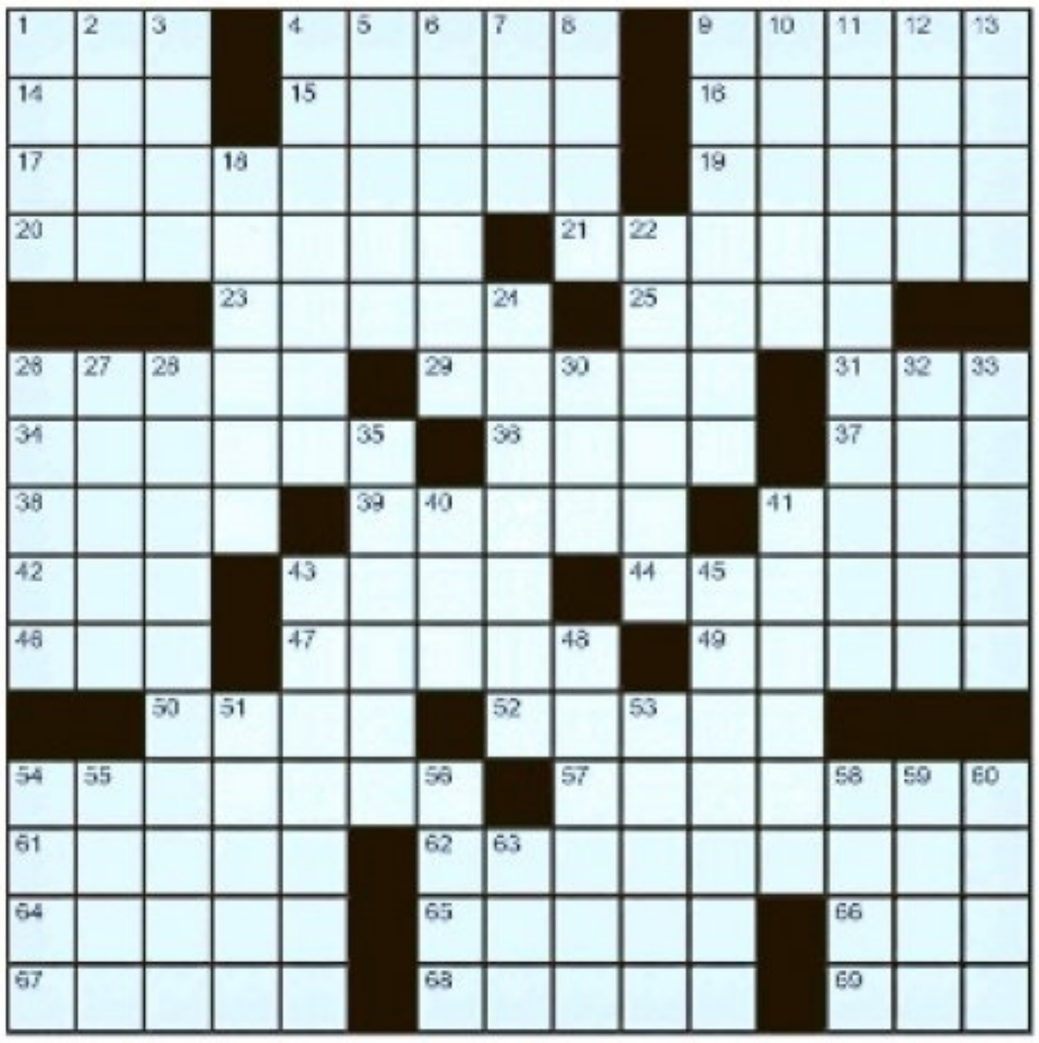
CROSSWORD Canada Across and Down

BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



ACROSS
1. Frequently, short style
4. Weasel kin
9. Spy for Moses
14. Vertical's opp.
15. Gabriel of "Miller's Crossing" (1990)
16. Sheep-like
17. Computer-using accessories
19. Ski run
20. Toughened
21. Those in hot pursuit in movie car chase scenes
23. More dreadful
25. Deli side dish
26. Gilbert and Rue
29. "Same here."
31. Want __ (Newspaper notices)
34. Thuds
36. Tense/tight
37. Ink-on-skin pic
38. Cars member Mr. Ocasek's
39. Unexpressed, but understood
41. Ms. Gershon
42. "Yuck."
43. Cummerbund
44. Cause and __
46. Funnyman Mr. Brooks
47. Polynesian amulets
49. Old tales
50. Genesis paradise
52. Type of duck
54. Fiercely feminine big cat
57. Ode on a __ Urn (1819 John Keats poem)
61. "You're in __ of trouble!"
62. "The Age of __" (1993) starring Daniel Day-Lewis and Michelle Pfeiffer
64. "__ Schoen" by Wayne Newton
65. American frontiersman, Daniel __ (b.1734 - d.1820)
66. Office neckwear
67. Found the math sum
68. Trigonometry ratios
69. Not even, numbers-wise

DOWN
1. Electrical resistance units
2. __ the bill
3. 1983 Spandau Ballet hit
4. Pyramid-topped pillar
5. Computer keyboard user
6. Conducted a transaction in sports or business
7. Terminate
8. Inactivity
9. Cockpit professional
10. Canadian singer Eva
11. Founded in 1972, eponymously-named Canadian cosmetics company: 2 wds.
12. __'acte (Play interlude)
13. Busy bugs
18. Certain cars
22. Shrewd
24. British movie director Guy
26. Theatre curtain fabric
27. Lewis Carroll character
28. Neil Young or Bryan Adams: 2 wds.
30. Mai __ (Cocktail)
32. Dazzle on the ballroom floor
33. Athletic trivia
35. Finishings on backyard decks
40. Get permission
41. Roller coaster ride sensation
43. __ in tradition
45. Defrauds
48. Log into an Internet account: 2 wds.
51. Toronto-born single-named music star
53. Talk in a monotone
54. "Presto!"
55. "__ a wonderful time."
56. The Kardashians, e.g.
58. "__ the Groove" by Madonna
59. __-tongued
60. Require
63. "__, _ don't." (Retort to "Yes, you do.")

IT'S ALL IN THE STARS Your daily horoscope by Francis Drake

Aries March 21 - April 20
Start this week gently, because you have been high-viz and talking to lots of people. Today you want to be more lowkey, and that's just fine.

Taurus April 21 - May 21
Important discussions might take place between you and a female acquaintance. This could be about a competition with someone. Why not share your goals with this person?

Gemini May 22 - June 21
People will notice you today. They might discuss the personal details of your life, for some reason. Fear not — people see you in a positive light.

Cancer June 22 - July 23
Explore something new and different today to satisfy your urge to expand your world and learn something new. Grab any chance to travel or talk to people from other backgrounds.

Leo July 24 - Aug. 23
Clean up loose details about shared property, inheritances, taxes and debt, because you will feel better if you do this. Work to get out of debt.

Virgo Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
Be easygoing and accommodating with others today, because that's the easiest way to get through the day. Two weeks from now, you can be demanding — but not today.

Libra Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
You begin this week with a sense of purpose and a desire to get better organized. In fact, you will want to improve your health through exercise and wiser eating. Congratulations!

Scorpio Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
Today you are a Friday person in a Monday world. You would rather play hooky, party or just goof off.

Sagittarius Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
If you can cocoon at home today, you will prefer to do this because you want to hide among familiar surroundings. Family discussions might be significant, especially with a female relative.

Capricorn Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
Today you will trust your hunches more than your logic and intellect. You don't always do this, but sometimes you do — and today is one of those days.

Aquarius Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
If shopping today, you will spend your money emotionally. You will buy what you want, and not necessarily what you need. Been there, done that.

Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
Because the Moon is in your sign today, you will respond to people around you with heightened emotion. They might not understand this.

CONCEPTIS SUDOKU by Dave Green

Every row, column and box contains 1-9

		3				8		
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8			9		2			5
	3	2				1	6	
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7	4	8	3	9	1	5	2	6
5	2	9	8	7	6	3	4	1
9	6	2	1	3	4	7	8	5
4	5	1	6	8	7	2	3	9
8	7	3	9	2	5	1	6	4
6	8	7	5	1	3	4	9	2
1	3	4	2	6	9	8	5	7
2	9	5	7	4	8	6	1	3

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HEADLINE
COFFEE

Mountainous taste

Colombian Excelso takes coffee lovers to new heights

By: Sean Deasy

Juan Valdez and his trusty mule Conchita; fictional characters that embody Colombian coffee.

For many of us the mention of Colombian coffee summons the enduring vision of coffee farmer Juan Valdez and his trusty mule.

And with good reason.

We've seen the ubiquitous fictional character since the late 1950s in everything from TV and magazine advertisements to logos and stamps (pictured, above) as the iconic symbol of the National Federation of Coffee Growers of Colombia. It seems the Colombians made decent coffee at the midway point of the 20th Century and invested heavily in spreading the word.

"Colombian was the most popular coffee [back in the day] because they had the best marketing," says Eric Shabsove of Mountain View Estates Coffee. "They rode that marketing campaign for a long time, even when the quality of the coffee wasn't as good as some neighbouring countries."

But that has all changed, says Shabsove, whose Toronto-based roastery imports coffee from around the globe. "Colombian coffee is the real deal now: great coffees with the perfect balance and acidity. You can light roast or dark roast the beans, or you can put them in blends. And it's a washed coffee so it's also a very clean cup – quite enjoyable to drink both in the morning and afternoon."

Shabsove is not alone in his admiration for Colombian java. The prevailing belief among coffee aficionados is that Colombian coffee is once again a leader in world coffee. And a great deal of its resurgent success, understandably, stems from where the beans are grown. In this case, Excelso Coffee is from the state of Huila in south-western Colombia.

Huila a good cup

The area is incredibly diverse in terms of climate and landscape: the southern part of the region grazes the Andes Mountains, which helps create an unprecedented growing capacity.

Most coffee-producing countries only harvest once a year – some are fortunate enough to harvest twice. Not so in Huila, which is near the equator, boasts near-perfect weather, and sits at a considerably high altitude. "This coffee is unique because of the weather and the altitude and the Andes Mountains nearby," says Shabsove. "They harvest this coffee almost all year round."

There's such an abundance of trees that some will go dormant. "But when you've got this kind of soil and this kind of weather, you'll have flowers beside coffees that are beautiful cherries. That's just what's amazing."

That's also why the beans are handpicked, says Shabsove. "Because you could have a flower, you could have a green bean and you could have a red cherry ready to go, so you have to pick each one separately."

What does Huila's diverse climatic conditions and fertile soil mean for coffee lovers? Quite simply: a variety of high-quality, well-balanced beans with near-perfect acidity.

It's produced in a micro-lot structure, where producers pick the ripe cherries, which are then washed, dried and processed into dry parchment. The product is then sent to a central hub where the coffee is sorted for quality and readied for export.

Ultimately this coffee is destined to leave a very good taste in your mouth.

Cadefihuila cares

Who are the growers behind Colombian Excelso coffee? The Cooperativa Departmental de Caficultores del Huila, or Cadefihuila, for short.

Cadefihuila was established in 1963 by just 19 members with the goal of uniting the many small coffee producers in the region. Their mission? To increase their members' income, attempt to solve social and economic problems, and protect against an instable coffee market.

Their numbers grew considerably in the 1990s, as producers from other areas of Huila joined the group. This created the large and multi-departmental co-op that Cadefihuila is today. The co-op now comprises 4,000 members from 25 municipalities across the state.

In 2014 the organization became Fairtrade certified, which has fortified their mission to support their members in shaping a sustainable future for their business. They are able to offer the best possible price to their coffee producers, as well as provide technical services, farming products and access to international markets. The organization continues to grow and remains committed to becoming a world leader of specialty Colombian coffees, in particular.

Their many social initiatives have turned heads in the industry. "They have scholarships for the children of the producers, that's one area that they focus strongly on," says Shabsove. "They also do a lot of medical projects for their members and the people that participate in production. So they do a lot of good things for the people and Fairtrade helps them as well."

Fairtrade impacts

Certainly the Fairtrade premium is an asset. Investments have been made in training on environmental criteria and on how to farm sustainably without damaging the ecosystem's biodiversity. One notable project is currently underway to renovate the plantations to combat la roya (leaf rust disease).

Cadefihuila has also made great progress in providing coffee infrastructure, such as drying and milling facilities, to their members. The intention is to develop infrastructure further and upgrade water treatment systems. The group has also developed a business and marketing strategy for their coffee.

The co-op now has two technical assistance teams – one for agriculture and the other for environmental sustainability. Training in crop management to boost quality and yields has already resulted in higher production levels.

A certain Colombian coffee grower, standing alongside his four-legged companion, could hardly be blamed for beaming with pride.

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